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TAGS: MARR MASS MOPS PREL PTER IZ EZ
SUBJECT: CZECHS ARE COMMITTED TO IRAQ THROUGH 2007

REF: A. STATE 55436
1B. PRAGUE 1543

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff met with MFA Deputy Director of the Security Policy Department Daniel Kostoval April 26 to discuss Iraq troop contributions and deliver ref A. Kostoval confirmed the Czechs will maintain current troop levels through 2007, and will continue their multi-faceted efforts to stabilize Iraq (ref B).

¶2. (C) Kostoval also said the Czech MFA is planning an initiative that, if approved, would support civic institutions in Basra. The current thinking is to form a sister city relationship between Basra and Brno (the second largest city in the Czech Republic). Links formed between city officials would allow Czech officials to offer their counterparts assistance and know how on topics such as best practices in local administration, and infrastructure development.

¶3. (S/NF) Kostoval said the Czech Ambassador to Iraq recently returned from Baghdad and briefed MFA officials on his personal views of the current security situation in Iraq. Kostoval shared some of the Ambassador's views (please protect):

-- The Ambassador believes the conflict is a full-blown civil war, albeit between more than two sides.

-- The situation on the ground is worse than has been reported. Indeed, British troops have unilaterally changed patrol reports of Czech troops to provide a more optimistic account of the situation. An official protest to this practice lodged by Czech military authorities was dismissed without comment.

-- The number of coalition troops is insufficient to provide needed security and stability. The wall being built to provide additional security for a Sunni neighborhood is a public relations failure (and is rejected by the very people it would protect).

-- The Kurds have already established their own separate territory, and are operating it accordingly.
GRABER